Release of Pakistani fishermen

4456. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has, recently, released 160 Pakistani fishermen;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has also announced similar gesture on reciprocity basis, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to take up the release of Indians presently languishing in Pakistani jails?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) On February 9, 2001, Government unilaterally decided to release 160 Pakistani fishermen detained in India. These fishermen are expected to be repatriated shortly.

(b) Subsequently, Pakistan announced the release of 84 Indian fishermen in its custody. It later permitted consular access to another 76 fishermen detained in Pakistan. It is expected that these 160 Indian fishermen would shortly return to India.

(c) Our efforts at securing the early release of the remaining 142 Indian fishermen in Pakistani custody continue.

Resumption of Talks on Kashmir

4457. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed by militants in Jammu and Kashmir since the declaration of cease-fire by Government;

(b) whether Government have taken any fresh initiative with the Government of Pakistan to resume talks for the solution of Kashmir problem; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what is the response of that Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Under the unilateral peace initiative announced by Prime Minister on 19th November 2000, security forces have been instructed not to initiate combat operations against militants in Jammu & Kashmir. Government have also expressed their desire to hold talks with all those who abjure violence, making it equally clear that those who continue to indulge in violence will be dealt with effectively. As per available figures between 28.11.2000 and 19.3.2001 (*i.e*, 112 days), 158 members of the Security Forces and 332 civilians have been killed.

(b) and (c) The State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. A part of the territory of the State is under the forcible and illegal occupation by Pakistan. Under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, which are the cornerstones of India-Pakistan relations, both countries are committed to work towards the establishment of good neighbourly relations and resolve all issues peacefully through direct bilateral discussions.

As an initiator of dialogue India is committed to the resumption of the Composite Dialogue. An appropriate environment is an obvious pre-requisite for a meaningful dialogue. The cessation of cross border terrorism and the abandonment of hostile propaganda are necessary ingredients of such an environment. Pakistan's continued sponsorship of cross border terrorism and its vicious anti-India propaganda demonstrate its hostile and negative policies towards India.

Review at 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty

4458. SHRI K. K. BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Nepal has been asking for the renewal of Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950;

(b) if so, whether Government have reviewed the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty/replacement reflecting the current realities;

(c) if so, the steps contemplated by Government in this regard;